

June 1954

Volume 33

Number 386

# ***LABOUR ORGANISER***

## **★ CONTENTS ★**

**New Polling Places**

**Boundary Review: Final Stages**

**Is a 'Surgery' Worth it?**

**Money by Other Means**

**Is Postal Vote a Bore?**

**PRICE FIVEPENCE**

## Situations Vacant

**DEPTFORD C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms may be obtained from **W. J. Stimpson, 435 New Cross Road, Deptford, S.E.14**, to whom they must be returned not later than 30th June, 1954.

**SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE (HENLEY C.L.P.)**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Experience in a Rural Constituency preferred. Application forms from **Mrs. C. de Gruchy, 16 Kennylands Road, Sonning Common, near Reading**, to whom they must be returned not later than 25th June, 1954.

**BANBURY C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms obtainable from **Mr. W. E. Knipe, Labour Club, 32 West Bar, Banbury, Oxfordshire**, to whom they must be returned not later than Monday, 21st June, 1954.

**ST. MARYLEBONE C.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. Application forms may be had from **Mr. David Maurice, 88 Park Road, London, N.W.1**, to whom they should be returned not later than Saturday, 26th June, 1954.

L 225

(Situations Vacant continued on page 116)

*You must see the*

**LONDON  
CO-OPERATIVE  
Exhibition**

**ROYAL  
FESTIVAL HALL  
SOUTH BANK**

**28th JUNE  
TO  
3rd JULY**

LONDON CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.

## MONEY—CASH BRASS—TIN

Call it what you like  
IT'S ALL

## FUNDS!!!

Send for our free fund-raising  
samples, only 3d. postage, to:—

**THE IDEAL PRINTERS**  
12, Midland Street, HULL

THE "FUND-RAISING"  
SPECIALISTS

FULL UNION SHOP SINCE 1922  
EST: 1919

## ON ITS TOES



Old and new readers  
describe the DAILY  
HERALD of 1954 as  
"on its toes".

They mean that they are en-  
joying its new, easy-to-read  
layout and its lively and  
original features.

Above all they value the firm  
grip of its reports and com-  
ments on vital issues of world  
peace and on daily events that  
affect work, wages, houses and  
families.

## DAILY HERALD

The Livelier Paper—And Labour Too



# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

PUBLISHED BY THE LABOUR PARTY, TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

VOL. 33. NO. 386

JUNE, 1954

PRICE FIVEPENCE

## Local Elections Lesson

IN the local elections this year, in Scotland, Labour registered a gain of 46 seats, and lost 16, and won control of six councils, one of them being Dundee. In England and Wales, 468 borough council seats were gained, for a loss of only 38. Eight county boroughs and six non-county boroughs were captured, with the loss of only three non-county boroughs. Two hundred and forty-nine district council seats were won and 48 were lost. Control of 18 urban district councils was won, and two were lost. Altogether, Labour won 763 seats and lost 102, making a nett gain of 661.

These results are good, and we can be happy about them, but we should not read into them that which is not there. They do not mean that the Labour Party has the next General Election already in the bag: nor do they mean that there has been a big swing from the Tories to Labour.

An examination of the aggregate vote, in fact, points to electoral apathy, and fortunately this apathy has been greater in the case of the Tories than in ours. For instance, in Birmingham, this year's Labour vote was 149,387 as against last year's total of 158,407. The Birmingham Tory vote this year was 142,911, and last year it was 156,106. In Nottingham this year's Labour vote totalled 38,079, and last year's 39,520, and the Tory vote this year was 37,042, compared with 41,903 a year ago.

We have always taken the view that the interest (or apathy) of the supporters of political parties is a more important factor than the transference of support from one party to another. Recent by-elections, no less than the local elections, demonstrate that the political pattern in this country is much the same today as it was in 1951 and in 1950, and some 200 marginal seats hold the key in any General Election. The main task of Constituency Labour Parties in these marginal areas is to retain the interest of known supporters, and to create effective election machinery which will ensure a maximum turn-out on polling day.

The circulation of leaflets and similar publications, the holding of meetings, door-to-door canvassing, are all methods of maintaining interest, but all this work between elections comes to nought if the election machine does not function efficiently during the 14 hours of polling day. Attention to our election machinery is one of our most urgent tasks.

## QUAIR'S PAGE

THE late Hilaire Belloc produced a mass of evidence in support of his declaration that the true end of man, and his felicity, is the digging of holes and the filling of them up again. In the narrow and peculiar field of political organisation it may similarly be held that the root problem eternally evading solution is to provide that every hole may be occupied by the peg that fits it.

This was borne upon me by the experience of two local elections in quick succession in the same ward. The town was one I did not know very well, but my job was fairly simple. All I had to do was to drive a car to and fro by a very zig-zag route between a council estate and the polling station, half a mile away. In each instance I was given a companion to go 'on the knocker'.

ON the first occasion my knocking colleague was a most beautiful girl, for whom I have a high admiration and not a little awe. She has given distinguished service to the League of Youth and its parent party. She went through the study course with flying colours. Her papa once told me, clearly expecting me to disbelieve such a remarkable statement, that she knew more about politics than he did; though why he regarded that as a tribute to the darling daughter I have never understood.

With the fruits of a scrappy and inefficient canvass in her hand she flitted from house to house, seeking with all her natural charm to winkle out the free and independent electors who were recorded as having promised to vote Labour.

To crawl along a few yards at a time, keeping level with her as she progressed, was easy enough, and on a pleasant summer evening was nothing of a hardship. But the results of all her earnest efforts were scanty indeed. At house after house she met only excuses or refusals, mostly from women, and I began to think very sourly of the kind of folk who could refuse this wondrous girl anything, since I am sure there is nothing she could not wheedle out of me, if she tried. The material result of her three hours' striv-

## A Peg for Every Hole

ing was that I carried five voters to the poll.

The next time, I found my companion far less attractive. He was burly in build, loud and truculent in speech, far from neat in his attire, and his grammar was well, imperfect. Altogether, not at all the type you would take into the saloon bar. My sensitive spirits sank as I drove him from the committee room to the estate, and I resigned myself to a barren evening.

My cup of bitterness overflowed when I learnt he had no canvass records and wanted none.

Then he went into action, while I sat oppressed with the most lugubrious forebodings. But not for long. From the first two houses he loaded five people, mostly heavyweights, into the car and zig-zagged them to the poll. When he returned he had a bigger load waiting on the road. This was repeated without intermission for the whole evening, and all told our 'bag' must have been about 200.

He knocked no knockers, but bustled round to the back doors. He appeared not only to know everybody but to know all their most intimate affairs. Some he chaffed, and some he bullied. The thing he said to some of them deeply shocked my modesty, but what did he care for my blushes? The only care he appeared to have was to break down the car by the end of the day, and he nearly succeeded.

AT five minutes after nine I got my first load back to the estate. My dough-fellow-worker stood sweating and be-raggled, and I own that I, too, felt a little dishevelled. He said, "Well, that's the Wharrabaht a pint, mate?"

I felt it best to humour him, and in low tavern we signified in the usual manner. I noticed that some of his familiar looked a bit aslant at me, but never mind. He had fitted all right.



# NEW POLLING PLACES: ACT NOW!

by L. G. SIMS

THE local government elections often bring out in sharp relief the inadequacy, or inconvenient siting, of polling stations. This is especially true in small towns and newly-developed housing estates. Now is the time to give consideration to the matter and take appropriate action.

The word 'consider' is important. Far too often have we received complaints about inadequate polling facilities and the refusal of the 'reactionary' local council to do anything about it, when, on enquiry being made, it has been found that no practical alternative had or could be suggested.

The responsibility for providing adequate polling facilities in local elections rests with the Returning Officers. In boroughs (other than metropolitan boroughs) it is the Mayor.

In the case of parliamentary elections the local authority, whose Clerk is the Registration Officer, is responsible for dividing the parliamentary constituency into polling districts, and for keeping them under review.

Both have to provide adequate polling facilities. It will be seen that, in effect, the duties of both are complimentary.

## Parliamentary Too

Further, the polling station allotted to local government electors from any parliamentary polling district, wholly or partly in the electoral area shall, unless there are special circumstances, be the parliamentary polling place—unless that parliamentary polling place is outside the local electoral area.

Remember, there can be a number of polling stations in one polling place.

It is now possible to give consideration to what is required. There should be a map of the area with the present polling stations indicated and the parliamentary polling districts marked. This will show

the positions of the polling stations in relation to the electors, and will take into account bus journeys, main roads, etc. If the siting is bad it will be necessary to consider (a) an alternative to the present site or (b) additional polling stations.

If it is thought that additional polling stations cannot be justified in terms of the size of the electorate, a more convenient site must be sought.

## Electorate Merits

Where more polling stations are to be sought it will be necessary to ensure that the size of the electorate merits it. This can be assessed by the total number of electors polling at the one polling place. It will be necessary to study the Registers for the various polling districts and if necessary to link them together to make neat composite groups.

If this can be done you can start to look for a suitable polling place.

Having prepared your map showing the present and proposed polling stations, together with the number of electors suggested for each polling place, it will be necessary to consider an adequate polling place.

The suggested polling place must be easily accessible to the bulk of the electors; contain sufficient room for a number of polling stations; have rooms capable of housing the Presiding Officer and his staff, and voting compartments which ensure strict privacy.

The usual place is a school, or some other public building: places of worship are excluded. In some cases, unoccupied houses are used and a few local authorities have obtained portable polling stations.

Once the detailed work has been completed, it is possible to draft proposals based on practical consideration. Representations, in the first place, are best made locally.

The Labour Group should be consulted in order that they can raise and discuss the matter on the appropriate Committee of the Council. If we have no representation the proposals should be presented to the Clerk or Mayor. If this can be done

on a non-party basis so much the better.

Consultation with our opponents has secured joint action and this is well worth consideration.

If these avenues do not lead to success, then a public petition should be organised within the electoral area. Section 11 (4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1949, makes provision for this in respect of parliamentary elections.

### **Local Elections**

For the reasons outlined at the beginning of this article it can be assumed that if the Home Secretary did move in respect of parliamentary polling places the same would apply for local government elections. The wording of Section 11 (4) is as follows:

If any interested authority or not less than thirty electors in a constituency make a representation to the Secretary of State that the powers conferred by this section have not been exercised so as to meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency or any body of those electors, the Secretary of State shall consider the representation and may if he thinks fit,

- (a) direct the local authority or, in Scotland, returning officer by whom the powers are exercisable to make any alterations which the Secretary of State thinks necessary in the circumstances; and
- (b) if the local authority or returning officer fails to make those alterations within a month after the direction is given, himself make the alterations; and any alterations made by the Secretary of State under this subsection shall have effect as if they had been made by the local authority or returning officer.

A canvass of the area should result in considerable support if the case is justified and the larger the number signing the petition the more chance of its success.

The petition must be signed by electors residing in the area under consideration. If action is undertaken at this stage it could be pointed out to the electors that if such alterations were made it might operate at the next general election and thereby be of advantage all round.

The wording of the petition could be

on the following lines:

**TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS.** (To the Secretary of State in the case of Scotland).

We, the undersigned, being electors for the said (electoral area), (ward), (polling district), herewith make representation under Section 11 (4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1949, that the powers conferred under Section 11 of that Act have not been exercised so as to meet the reasonable requirements of the electors of the (area) and pray that sufficient alteration may be made to give electors convenient and reasonable polling facilities. (Here outline the case, stressing inconveniences, and append map appropriately marked).

This procedure may at first appear to be a lengthy job, but in practice it is not so. The experience of the recent elections, plus local knowledge can soon be utilised. It is, however, necessary to emphasise the importance of careful thought and of planning at the initial stages.

The purpose must be to endeavour to interest the local authority and only to approach the Home Secretary if these efforts fail.

By giving attention to this matter now, well in advance of the preparation of the next Register of Electors, it is possible that the Registration Officer will view the request more favourably. The electors will respond more readily, as the inconvenience of voting in the recent election will be still fresh in their mind. And remember too, next year we have the whole series of local government elections—county, parish, rural, urban and borough.

### **QUOTE L99777**

THE Labour Party now has a Co-operative Society Trading Number. By occasionally quoting L99777 when purchasing at Co-ops in the national membership scheme, individual members and affiliated organisations can help the Party's national funds.



# CENTRAL COMMITTEE ROOM BOSS

by H. R. UNDERHILL

THE Chief Clerk at the central committee room is an important officer (he can act as deputy to the agent) and the choice should be made with great care. He needs to have administrative capacity, a methodical approach to problems, commonsense and a level head, and a happy knack of handling voluntary workers. Should the constituency honorary secretary not be the election agent, he might be an admirable person for this post.

## BE BUSINESSLIKE

The capacity of this officer will be reflected in the atmosphere of the central committee room. He will see to it that at all times the committee room is kept tidy and businesslike. If the committee room lends itself to window-display, the Chief Clerk may make this one of his responsibilities.

His varied duties will include the handling of enquiries, many of which he will be able to deal with himself, others may need to be passed on to the agent, or another officer. He should be always tactful and courteous to callers, but some desiring to see the agent or candidate may have to be steered away, firmly but nicely.

Having put the committee room in order he will, after consultation with the agent, see that necessary stationery sundries are obtained. It is possible, of course, that such items may have been obtained in advance and stored, in which case the Chief Clerk will unpack them and check. He will sort out items for the various committee rooms and see that arrangements are made for them to be delivered.

Writing and filling will be one of his most important responsibilities. It should be stressed that if a person to act as Chief Clerk cannot be found, many of his duties must fall on the agent, but it is absolutely essential for someone other than the agent to supervise the writing.

An early decision should have been taken as to the items to be handled. In

THE smooth running of an election depends in no small manner upon the efficiency of the Central Committee Room, says H. R. Underhill, in this article, the fourth in a series on the Planning and Running of an Election. The series will be concluded next month.

most constituencies these will be the envelopes to take the election address for the free post, an election special and sundry leaflets for distribution. Some may also issue a form of 'poll card' which must be within legal requirements, but I believe we should persuade the electors to use the official poll cards issued by the R.O.

The Chief Clerk should duplicate instructions for the workers undertaking writing—these must be simple, but unmistakably clear as to what is desired. An early decision will need to have been taken as to whether all writing will be done in the central committee room.

Which ever system is to be followed the Chief Clerk must keep clear records of progress, and if envelopes are issued from the central committee room to members, or to areas, he must see that all details are recorded. He must give clear instructions on when the writing should be completed and the envelopes returned to the central committee room.

## SUPERVISE FILLING

He should have the envelopes checked against the register, and then supervise the filling—it is seldom desirable for the free post envelope to include other than the election address. If any filling is to be done in the areas he must must keep a check on the work. It is most undesirable for filling to be done in members' homes.

The agent will have seen the postmaster respecting the free post arrangements, and will inform the Chief Clerk of details, give instructions. In conformity with the postmaster's requirements the bundles will be placed in the G.P.O. sacks—these should be hung, with cards or chalk

marks indicating the respective postal number and polling district.

The Chief Clerk will arrange for the collection of sacks by the G.P.O. and will keep careful records of such collections. He must ensure that no electors are missed.

As supplies of literature, posters, etc., are delivered to the central committee room the Chief Clerk will check and record. He should immediately place specimens in a special box file and see that other copies are given to the election agent.

The agent will give the Chief Clerk instructions for the distribution of the various items; some supplies may have to be transferred to the area committee rooms. He will make the necessary arrangement to ensure the various distributions fit in with the prepared timetable.

A section of the central committee room should be set aside for delivery arrangements; a simple expedient is to have a separate box for each area and as items are to be delivered they are placed in the correct box, along with instructions for the recipient. Delivery will then be arranged through the Transport Officer.

Particular care must be taken to adhere to the delivery instructions of the meetings officer re timing and quantities of meetings' leaflets and bills.

The Chief Clerk will be in charge of all the outgoing post, and also the addressing of envelopes for removals and absent voters from lists supplied by the appropriate officer. In many instances it may also be appropriate for the Chief Clerk to handle petty cash purchases.

## **DO DUPLICATING**

He will see that the routine of the central committee room runs smoothly and to take this work away from the agent, who will have worries enough. He will see that items of duplicating for the agent and other officers are carried through in order of priority.

The supervision of such work as pasting posters on boards, and tying strings for the car-boards, has to be done, and the Chief Clerk is the important auxiliary on whom will fall such duties.

His duties are multifarious, too numerous to detail. Some may appear unimportant, but they all add up to a great deal.

All constituencies will need to appoint

a number of area officers. In borough constituencies each will cover a ward, or number of wards, according to local circumstances. In counties, each will have responsibility for a large town, or a rural district, or maybe a town and some surrounding parishes — each constituency must determine this in the light of needs and past experiences.

## **AREA OFFICERS**

As mentioned in my opening article, I do not favour the appointment of sub-agents in the county constituencies. I prefer the election agent to retain in his own hands the legal responsibility for the election, the direction of all activities and the control of expenditure. The Area Officers will act as 'sub-agents' except that they will have no legal standing, nor any authority to incur election expenses.

Area Officers are key-men and need to be experienced workers with good understanding of election organisation. Each will be in charge of his area committee room; some may have further sub-committee rooms open during the campaign, but others may have such additional committee rooms for polling day only.

The appointment of Area Officers retains essential central direction but permits devolution and avoids the inefficient practice of every small committee room being directly controlled from the central committee room.

The Area Officer will be responsible for ensuring that the day to day work of canvassing, distribution, etc., is carried out. Careful attention will be given to instructions given by the agent and other key-officers.

He will prepare a daily report of the canvass for the canvass officer. Should there be other sub-committee rooms in the area, he will obtain their returns and prepare a report for the entire area.

He will supervise the checking of the canvass returns and the preparation of the 'promise' records according to the system pre-determined for the constituency.

He will be responsible for some of the arrangements for public meetings within the area; seeing the platform is arranged and that the hall is in order; that arrangements are made for stewarding and for the collection and the sale of literature. On these matters the meetings' officer will send detailed instructions.

In line with the plans detailed, accord-



ing to the nature of the constituency, the Area Officer may have to supervise outdoor meetings, poster parades, etc. He may also be requested by the canvass officer to arrange for special mass canvass efforts.

The Area Officer will see that items to be delivered are counted, bundled and labelled. This greatly aids efficiency and tidiness, and will be appreciated by the worker undertaking delivery who, otherwise, might find himself either annoyingly short or over-supplied with material.

He will keep in close touch with any sub-committee rooms in his area and throughout the campaign will take steps to ensure that polling day committee rooms are obtained. He will compile rotas for polling-day duties.

He must do all possible to ensure there are sufficient workers for the various tasks that have to be carried through during the various stages of the campaign.

On polling day he should tour his area, checking both the functioning of the committee rooms and the procedure at polling stations, and at the pre-arranged times he will make his reports on voting progress, having obtained local reports from the various sub-committee rooms.

## **WOMAN OFFICER**

Most parties will surely be able to find competent woman member to act as Woman Officer. If the person appointed commands great respect of the woman members her work can be invaluable, but

the choice must be made with care.

It must be made perfectly clear that the Woman Officer does not run a separate campaign, but works under the Election Agent, as do all other officers, and carries out her duties in accordance with the prepared campaign and the agent's general instructions.

Her main task will be to mobilise the maximum possible services of women members. During the day-time, women usually are the only workers available and, with adequate preparation, there is much good work that can be carried through.

Teams of women can undertake mass-canvassing with the candidate. Teams also can be organised for day-time distribution of literature. Day-time work in the committee rooms on writing, folding and filling is invaluable, and can be made a pleasant task.

It should be borne in mind that the election may come in a period with short day light and in bad weather; it will, therefore, be even more invaluable in such circumstances to have as much day-time work carried through as is possible and to do this we have to rely in the main on our women members.

Most constituencies also have to rely to a great degree on women on polling day for staffing the committee rooms and as polling station checkers, and car pilots during the day. A Woman Officer can be of enormous assistance in mobilising women workers for these tasks.

# *THE SAVETIME*

## *CANVASS CARDS*

—make canvassing **EASIER** with **MORE EFFICIENT** results

**SAVE ENORMOUS TIME** • **IN USE BY EVERY PARTY**

15/6d. per 100. P.T. 13/6d. (Post free 500 or over).

Write for sample:

**EDWARDS & BRYNING LTD. ROCHDALE**

THE Boundary Commissions are now in the last stages of their general review of the Parliamentary constituencies in the United Kingdom.

Recommendations published recently bring the total of English constituencies dealt with to 386, leaving a total of 120 constituencies in Hampshire, Lancashire and London still to be reported upon.

With the publication of recommendations affecting 15 Glasgow constituencies, the Scottish Commission have now only two constituencies in Ayrshire to report on. No recommendations have yet been published for any of the 36 Welsh constituencies.



The following is a summary of the most recent recommendations:

*Glasgow.* The Glasgow recommendations leave three constituencies as they were. The boundaries of 12 are altered, the constituencies of Camlachie, Hillhead, and Tradeston disappear and are replaced by Provan, Kelvinside and Craigton. The total number of constituencies in Glasgow remains the same.

*Gloucestershire.* It is recommended that the number of Gloucestershire constituencies should remain at 12. Bristol is to retain six seats by the addition of two urban districts taken from South Gloucestershire.

Thornbury is transferred to South Gloucestershire and the present Stroud and Thornbury becomes Stroud constituency, having added part of a parish at present in Gloucester constituency, and the rural district of Tetbury, at present in the Cirencester and Tewkesbury constituency.



*Staffordshire.* Recommendations for Staffordshire involve 13 of the existing 18 constituencies in changes and a new constituency is created. Changes in the case of Brierley Hill, Bilston, and Rowley Regis and Tipton, are only slight, but Cannock loses the urban district of Brownhills and has added the urban district of Wednesfield, now in Wednesbury; Lichfield and Tamworth loses the urban district of Ald-

# FINAL of Boun

The Boundary Commission review of Parliamentary constituencies they were required to make under the Seats Act, 1949. In the published to date changes and existing constituencies. The

ridge; and with the addition of Brownhills and Aldridge urban districts, Walsall is made into two constituencies, Walsall North and Walsall South.

The urban district of Kidsgrove is detached from Leek and is added to Stoke, and the wards of Stoke are reshuffled and the constituencies named Stoke North, Stoke South-East, and Stoke South-West. Wolverhampton North-East loses a ward to Wolverhampton South-West.



*Nottinghamshire.* Nottinghamshire constituencies are to remain at 10, but only Carlton is unaffected. Nottingham retains its four constituencies by the addition of the West Bridgford urban district, now in Rushcliffe, and the Hucknall urban district, now in Broxtowe.

The city wards are reshuffled and the constituencies named Central, North, South, and West. Broxtowe, minus Hucknall urban district, and some parishes which go to Rushcliffe, plus Sutton in Ashfield urban district, now in Mansfield, is renamed Ashfield. Mansfield, having lost Sutton in Ashfield, gains Mansfield Woodhouse urban district from Newark and Warsop urban district from Bassetlaw.

It is now plain that the English Commission is working on an average quota of electors of 57,122. By taking an administrative county and dividing the total number of electors on the 1953 register by 57,122, it arrives at the number of constituencies to which the county is entitled. It then recommends additional seats, or the abolition of existing seats.

For instance, Staffordshire, with 18



# TAGES

## Review

ched the final stages of their  
n the United Kingdom which  
e of Commons Redistribution  
endations which have been  
involving over a third of the  
lls what these changes mean.

existing constituencies, has an average electorate of 61,837. It is therefore entitled, by the Commission's methods, to an additional seat.

The West Riding of Yorkshire, on the other hand, has an average electorate of 54,709 for its 46 seats, and therefore it loses two seats.

The English Commission's proposals involve changes in 155 constituencies, which is well over one-third of those reported on.

Some of these changes are only slight, but a considerable number are substantial and one might have thought that if in its general review the Commission felt it necessary to upset so many constituencies, it would have gone further and dealt with the big differences in the size of electorates, which have been allowed to remain.

Rule 4 of the rules under which the Commissions work reads:

'Rule 4 (1) So far as is practicable having regard to the foregoing rules—

(a) in England and Wales—

(i) no county or any part thereof shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other county or the whole or part of a county borough or metropolitan borough:

(ii) no county borough or any part thereof shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other county borough or the whole or part of a metropolitan borough:

(iii) no metropolitan borough or any

part thereof shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other metropolitan borough:

(iv) no county district shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another;

(b) in Scotland, no burgh other than a county of a city shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another;

(c) in Northern Ireland, no county district shall be included partly in one constituency and partly in another ...'

Rule 5. The electorate of any constituency shall be as near the electoral quota as is practicable having regard to the foregoing rules; and a Boundary Commission may depart from the strict application of the last foregoing rule if it appears to them that a departure is desirable to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorate of any constituency and the electoral quota, or between the electorate thereof and that of neighbouring constituencies in the part of the United Kingdom with which they are concerned.

These latest recommendations emphasise how ready the English Commission has been to depart from the strict application of Rule 4. Bristol has added two urban districts, Walsall has added two urban districts, Stoke has added one urban district, and Nottingham has added two urban districts.

The addition of county areas to constituencies in county boroughs already has been recommended in Bradford, Birmingham, Derby, Leicester, Gateshead, and Huddersfield; and South Shields has four of its wards shorn off and added to Jarrow. In the case of Reading, parts of the borough have been added to adjacent county constituencies.

To date 10 new seats are recommended and three are to be abolished. The reduction of seats in Lancashire and London, to compensate for the new seats, can only result in the creation of many anomalies, both in respect of local government boundaries and disparities in the size of electorates.

The recommendations for Lancashire and London are, therefore, awaited with some apprehension.

**THE EDITOR**

# MONEY BY OTHER MEANS

I WAS impressed by Sara Barker's article in the February *Labour Organiser* because it is not only courageous, but also it touches on a very delicate but important point: Party Finance.

The article put the whole difficulty in the proper perspective. Running football competitions may be a good way of financing the party work, but it will not revive the party spirit of helpfulness and sacrifice.

To those who say that this spirit does not exist any longer, I should like to ask: Have they ever tried to get money for a special purpose? Of course they have! There has probably been no difficulty in getting extra money by collection, or otherwise, if e.g. an active member falls ill and needs special financial support, or somebody would like to attend a conference and the money has to be found. In my experience the money has always been forthcoming.

I had a very impressive experience when I was secretary of an organisation called 'British Aid for German Workers'. This organisation had been formed to help German socialists shortly after the end of hostilities and one of its main activities was to take children from German socialists who had particularly suffered under the Nazis into families in this country for a three month recuperative holiday.

The children came in groups of twenty together with a teacher. The British local organisations who wanted to have such a group had to raise about £200, to pay expenses during the three months the

children were in this country.

Several Constituency Labour Parties and Women's Sections took part in this work. They all knew of the conditions and they all collected the £200 in order to have the German children. How did they manage this?

There was no end to finding new ways and means when the old ones did not produce the results. One party collected the money by asking for 1,600 half-crowns in ward meetings, at all socials

## by JENNY FLIESS

and at family parties: they even advertised in their local paper for them.

Another party invited famous film stars to garden parties in order to sell their autographs for quite a sum. I remember one party taking as much as £125 during one garden party by having Wendy Hiller as star guest.

Bus drivers were asked to give extra service to parties for making extra money, and the most touching case was of a woman taking on extra part-time cleaning in order to contribute to the upkeep of her young German visitor.

As I said before, the money came along, and the party did not suffer through these activities. On the contrary! A number of people got interested in this kind of work and later joined the party.

I wondered often what the secret of this success was. Perhaps it was that an immediate aim was present: to get a group of children into the town. Perhaps it was that the great effort was crowned with an *immediate* success, because the children were there to see, and their happy faces were a wonderful reward for all the extra work which had gone into the money raising effort. But it was certainly true that the spirit of helpfulness and sacrifice was not missing.

What are the lessons of all this? I think in the first place a *target* is important to achieve results. In Hendon South we have the ambition to have a full-time agent. And for this purpose we need a certain amount of money which our five wards have to collect. There is quite a keen competition to achieve the yearly ward target.

The annual financial report gives full



details of the ward achievements and an analysis of how the money has been collected (membership contributions, draws, competitions, fêtes, Christmas bazaars).

Not for a long time had we had such a good Christmas bazaar as last year when a target was set for every ward. Our ward social committee aimed at £50 profit and everybody thought they had gone crazy, but they actually achieved £56 profit at their stall. 'Nothing succeeds like success' and the social committee now thinks that it can manage any money raising activity.

Of course, a lot of work had been put into the bazaar stall and one of the 'best sellers' were home-made chocolates. Not the usual rough looking stuff but really good hand-made professional chocolates, packed in attractive boxes. Any good sized kitchen can be used for making chocolates and it is, of course, of great value if a confectioner is able to help you, but a great number of recipes are published during Christmas time which can be used for this work. It certainly is worth your while trying.

By looking for things to make for the bazaar we found several useful people among our members and I am sure there are 'professionals' everywhere. We found a toy maker, and he will teach us how to make really nice toys, and we found a woman who is making dolls' clothes professionally and she as well agreed to be our teacher. To use these people as tutors instead of asking them to make it all on their own will make it more enjoyable for them.

Even busy housewives, who generally will tell you that they do not know anything special could be of great help during bazaar time. They do know recipes for home-made delicacies which they could write down. The recipes can be duplicated and sold.

How even some ordinary activities can be turned into money raising efforts can be illustrated by an example in our Women's Section. We wanted to know more about the merits, or otherwise, of brown bread and flour, at the time when this controversy was in the news. One of our members not only gave a talk on the subject, but also demonstrated the value of brown flour by bringing along delicious bread, rolls and pastries, which we sold after the talk, thus making quite a nice sum of money.

It may be argued that we shall never

achieve as much with these money raising 'stunts' as we get from competitions. This may, or may not, be true, and my suggestions should not be considered as replacing them, but as additions designed to bring in the active help of members whom otherwise we would not see.

Everyone knows how difficult it is to inspire members to take part in our activities and some organisers have lost faith in their ability to arouse enthusiasm. The examples given above in connection with the visits of German children will be a consolation: the old spirit can be revived. It may even be that we could achieve more—financially and otherwise—if we had a similar activity in the welfare field as the one described.

I am thinking here of something like a Workers' Welfare Organisation as it exists in all continental countries, run by the Social Democratic Parties and the Trade Unions. Here is a field which gives a great amount of scope to those sympathisers who take no interest whatsoever in politics, but rather in personal fellowship and humanitarian activities; perhaps they may, by their welfare work, see the connection with political issues.

---

## New Agents

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

**MR. C. SPENCE**—as Secretary - Agent for Darlington. Mr. Spence is a wood-working machinist and has been Constituency Secretary for two years. He is 30.

**MR. L. BRIDGES**—as Secretary-Agent for Bristol South. Mr. Bridges, who is 38, has held full-time agencies at Chertsey, Isle of Wight and Cambridge. He has been an Organiser for the N.C.L.C. since May, 1953

**MR. D. G. HUGHES**—as Secretary-Agent for Bolton Borough. Mr. Hughes has been full-time agent in Northwich for the past two years. He is 26.

**MR. G. G. STUBBERT**—as Secretary-agent for South Norfolk. Mr. Stubbert was agent for Croydon Borough for seven years. He is 39.

# Is a 'Surgery' Worth it?

'Surgeries' for dealing with constituents' complaints have become a usual feature of Party work. How should they be run? Are they an electoral asset? Here are the views of a

Labour M.P. and of London Agents.

## THE Labour Party Advice Centre:

What is its electoral value? How should it function? These were questions recently discussed at a conference of London agents. A valuable paper was presented by Wilfred Fienburgh, M.P., on the composition, and management, of such a centre.

There follows an attempt at setting out the suggestions advanced by Mr. Fienburgh, those relating to the functions of the agent together with the observations of the agents. This is necessarily a very summarised version of an important session of a conference in which no less than 33 agents participated. The views of the agents were expressed through group discussions, *all* agents giving their opinions.

### A. THE COMPOSITION OF THE ADVICE CENTRE.

It is to be understood that this is a suggestion as to what provides an *ideal* advice centre.

1. The Member of Parliament should deal with cases which involve Ministerial or Parliamentary questions.
2. A county council member should be in attendance to deal with cases which fall within the locus of the county council.
3. A borough councillor should be in attendance to provide similar service on matters within the ambit of his authority.
4. *Legal Service.* Where competent legal advisers can be obtained a legal advice service should also be provided.

All members of the advice service, however, in categories 1, 2 and 3 must be adamant in refusing to proffer legal

advice unless they possess qualifications

### B. ORGANISATION.

1. *Rooms.* There should be available a waiting room for constituents and if the Women's Section could lay on tea, at a small charge, this will help to break down formality.  
Each member of the advice service should, if possible, have a separate room so that constituents can feel they are talking in absolute confidence.
2. *Rota.* The ideal is that the M.P. should attend every time. This is not always possible because of outstanding speaking engagements. When the Member is not present someone should be specifically deputed to take his place and to hand over the cases to him. County councillors and borough councillors should attend on a rota basis, if possible, not overloading them.
3. *Timing.* The service should take place at the same time and place every week and appointments should be booked for those constituents who are in a hurry or cannot attend at the regular service.

### C. DOCUMENTATION.

1. *Form to be filled in while constituents are waiting.* This should be a simple duplicated slip on which constituents should enter the date, name and address and the nature of the case. There should be also a blank space to be signed by the person handling the case.  
This form should be retained after signature by the constituent so that if he turns up a few weeks later there should be no difficulty in tracing who on the rota is handling the case.
2. *Case Form.* This should be filled in duplicate by the member of the service handling the case. It should include the date, name and address full details of case and a note on action to be taken. The original of this form should be retained by the



member handling the case. A copy should be filed in the party offices.

#### D. FOLLOW UP.

All letters arising and notes of interviews held with authorities should be filed in the party rooms with the case form in para. C (2) above. It is best to have one person concentrate, to the exclusion of other duties, upon handling these files. The Member may wish to keep his own files at home or, if he has a secretary, in his secretary's hands.

#### E. GENERAL.

Members of the service must not make easy promises in taking up cases. While promising to do all they can, they must not lay claim to powers which they do not possess.

Constituents should be kept informed at all stages of the case, even if many of the replies will be interim replies from the Ministries merely acknowledging and saying that the case is under review.

Where it can be arranged, a shorthand typist should be present, at least with the M.P., so that he can dictate letters to the Ministries in front of the constituent.

If this cannot be done the member of the service, or at least the M.P., should send to the constituent a copy of the letter which he has sent to the Ministry.

#### F. METHOD OF HANDLING CASES.

1. *Ministerial cases.* On receiving a reply from the Minister, the M.P. should not content himself with merely forwarding it with a compliment slip. A letter should be sent with the reply at least to soften the blow where the answer is adverse. He should be quite honest in replying and, where the case is a bad one, should say so whilst explaining why.

2. *Local Authority cases.* In some cases the local authority will arrange to reply direct to the constituent, sending a copy of the reply to the councillor or Member. This is helpful, particularly in the case of councillors who have no secretarial help available. It does, however, break the personal link between the member of the service and the constituent, so it is to be avoided where possible.

3. *Crank cases.* There will be many cases of people who are quite frankly mentally unbalanced. These are rather difficult. Many of these unfortunate individuals are lonely and this is often the root of their disturb-

ance. Sometimes what they need more than anything else is a sympathetic hearing so that they feel at least somebody is prepared to talk to them. Members of the service should not try to cure the crank by using amateur psychology.

4. *Publicity.* The dates and times of the Advice Centre should be well publicised but the temptation to over-publicise successes must be resisted. Every success over-publicised will produce a flow of other hopeful cases and the individuals concerned will feel more aggrieved than satisfied if their own particular case does not achieve success. The best publicity is that achieved by word of mouth.

5. *Personal Appearances.* Members of the service, in particular the M.P., who can afford the time should be advised to appear with and for a constituent before tribunals, etc. Many people are over-awed by a tribunal and do not make the best of their cases. An authoritative person can assist and help them.

6. *Form Filling.* Members of the service should undertake willingly to help constituents fill in the various forms which arise from the cases. Many people are afraid of forms.

7. The Member should try to remember faces and names. It is awkward for a constituent making his fifth appearance at the centre to be welcomed by a blank and vacant stare.

#### POINTS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Is an Advice Centre considered to be an essential part of political organisation, irrespective of any possible electoral benefit?

A. It was unanimously thought that an Advice Service was essential.

2. Could any part of the service indicated in the memorandum be done with equal advantage to the applicants, by other agencies? (Citizens' Advice Bureaux, etc.)

A. Seventy-five per cent thought definitely No. Twenty-five per cent answered Yes, but thought that it should also be given through the Party.

3. Is a 'surgery' the best way of organising a service of this kind? Is any less formal method used?

A. While it may not be the only way it was thought to be the best way: but some Parties keep 'open-house'

all day and work it successfully.

4. How are existing Advice Centres managed?

(i) Do the public representatives actually undertake the interviews?

A. This is varied according to the constituency. Some areas don't use their local councillors at all. Most areas use M.P.s (or candidates) and agents.

(ii) Who does the follow-up clerical work?

A. In most cases the M.P. or agent does the follow-up work. In most cases the persons who do the interviewing also do their own clerical work.

(iii) Should the agent play a principal or a minor role in the running of the Centre? i.e. should he be an adviser?

A. About one-third thought it should be a principal role; the rest thought the agent should act in supervisory capacity but not get too mixed up with the detail of the cases.

5. What interference, if any, with normal party working, does the institution of the Advice Centre create? What happens at (a) election times, (b) during membership campaigns, (c) other times of crisis?

A. It was thought that it did not interfere with organising work; but many parties suspend the 'surgery' at election time and cases are taken direct to M.P. or candidate.

6. Is there evidence of direct electoral benefit in having an Advice Service? Is there any means of gearing an Advice Service to the election machine?

A. The majority felt there was no electoral benefit. All thought that the service could not be geared to the election machine.

## COMMENTS BY THE REGIONAL OFFICER.

An Advice Service is not always related to a political set-up locally which is more or less 100 per cent Labour. Where the parliamentary seat is held by our opponents, but we have access to a majority Labour Group at county or district level, a service of considerable electoral value might be created, although the difficulties of running it need no emphasising.

The problem of the Constituency Labour

Party which is represented in Parliament by a very senior member—a Minister in a Labour Government—may be a good deal different from that with a backbench M.P.

## THE POSITION OF THE AGENT.

In the organisation of advice bureaux the duties of the agent may need definition. This is, perhaps, of special importance in relation to the Member of Parliament.

In relation to county and local councillors, who are not likely to have adequate clerical facilities, it seems desirable to have a very clear definition of the duties of the agent. The 'rota' system of attendance by local authority representatives is not always satisfactory.

In earlier years agents had to become very knowledgeable in all matters upon which people sought advice. Naturally these agents became closely identified with the advice service and this work sometimes took precedence over genuine organising functions.

The usage of the party premises in this connection is of considerable importance to the agent. There is normally a heavy demand on the premises for organisation purposes.

**J. W. Raisin**

## SITUATIONS VACANT—continued

**BUCKINGHAM C.L.P.**—(1951 Tory majority 54) invites applications for the post of Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with National Agreement. The Constituency, which covers a large rural area, is well organised, with a membership of nearly 5,000. The post offers great scope to a keen, active person. A Party car is available for the use of the Agent. Application forms may be obtained from **H. J. Price, 80 Church Green Road, Bletchley, Bucks.**, to whom they must be returned not later than 21st June, 1954.

**ACTON C.L.P.**—invites applications for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Sponsored Marginal seat (N.U.R.), own Hall and offices. Conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Salary £500 × £25 to £575. The commencing salary will be fixed within this scale according to the ability and present salary of the successful applicant. Application forms from **G. W. Reynolds, 30 Mill Hill Road, Acton, London, W.3**, to whom they must be returned by Tuesday, 22nd June, 1954. Persons who applied when this post was advertised on the scale salary should note that their application will still be considered.

**BRIGG C.L.P.**—(60 per cent of the electorate in the borough of Scunthorpe). Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary-Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms can be obtained from **The Secretary, Highfield House, Frances Street, Scunthorpe, Lincs.**, to whom they must be returned by Wednesday, 16th June, 1954.

(See also page 102)



## Around the Regions

# IS POSTAL VOTE A BORE?

**Y**OU know better than I do, that when postal voting is raised at Party meetings, the average listener looks as if he would like to blurt out, "For the love of Mike, don't bore us with that subject again."

All right, take that view if you wish, but at the same time realise that if you are in a marginal constituency, much of the political propaganda and organisational activity you are engaged in will be undermined and become ineffective unless you tackle, in a practical, business-like way, the postal vote situation.

If it were impossible to make any marked progress, I would not be writing these comments, but the fact is, there is a practical way of tackling the job. It is possible to build up in each marginal constituency, a list of known Labour postal voters.

It is not good enough just to have a copy of the general list from the Electoral Registration Officer. We must have, in each constituency, our own list of known Labour postal voters. Well, here is the plan.

Firstly, obtain a copy of the postal voting list from the Electoral Registration Officer. Extract the names of known Labour voters, and transfer them to the Party list of Labour postal voters.

Then find someone, maybe a pensioner, who is available during the day, and see whether he will undertake, for a period of six weeks, a paid, or voluntary, job. A wage, or out-of-pocket expense allowance, of £5 per week for the six-week period has been suggested for someone who is keenly interested in the work of the Party—a total of £30.

He should be thoroughly trained in the technique of postal voting, and should be given a list of individual members, and should start a methodical canvass of individual members. He should find out whether there are any entitled to postal votes, and in addition, whether there are any relatives or friends who can be relied

upon to vote Labour, who can also be enrolled as postal voters.

A supply of appropriate forms should be taken and filled in on the spot. The forms would be sent in to the appropriate authority, but in addition, and this is of vital importance, the names and addresses of these applicants must be added to the constituency party list of postal voters.

When the individual membership has been canvassed, part two of the scheme should come into operation, i.e. a canvass of known Labour supporters, based on information of general canvassing at election times. Much of the information obtained at the recent local government elections can be used for this purpose.

We know all this will take time. We know that it will not be possible to complete the job in a period of six weeks. We know that it may not be possible for one person to do it, but it will be a start of a practical plan, and the results of a six-weeks experiment, will so impress the average constituency party, that they will decide to carry on for a further period of time.

Supposing it does cost £30, or £60, and supposing, as a result of this work, you can build up a constituency party list of postal voters to the extent of 1,000, this will be sufficient to win a very high percentage of our marginal constituencies at the next General Election. If you are in a marginal constituency, you would consider that the £30 or £60 spent in the pre-election period was probably worth much more money spent in other ways in the election campaign.

I know there will be snags and difficulties, but why not get together in the first instance—the officers, agent and the prospective candidate—and talk about the plan.

I have been tempted to write these notes because of my experience in visiting a number of marginal constituencies where I have asked the question, "Can you show me a list of known Labour postal voters?" and the list has not been available.

In the same way as we keep a marked

register, in the same way as we keep a register or card index of individual members of our constituency parties, so should we keep a list or card index of known Labour postal voters which can be used at the appropriate time in the election campaign, in the same way as we call upon the known Labour supporters on polling day.

This job is vital. It must be done. It is the key to success. The old hit and miss method has failed. Let us see whether we can initiate something in the first instance in the form of an experiment. If it succeeds, we shall be proud of our efforts—efforts which will give us the vital information that will mean success.

South Western

E. V. REES

## Royal Dockyard

MAY 7th was a great day. As mine host of the *Jolly Caulkers* at Chatham remarked, "it ain't every dockyard gets a visit from the Prime Minister and the whole ruddy Cabinet—all in one day." "Splice the mainbrace," roared the boatswain. Never did rum slip so swiftly down the hatch.

The Prime Minister doffed his hat; the vast crowds gave a mighty shout; massed bands played *Rule Britannia* and the graceful ship slid down the slipway. The nation's mightiest battleship was launched.

Forty years later, as dawn broke on an October morning, the enemy fleets were sighted off Cape Trafalgar. In the action which followed the enemy's fleets were destroyed. A great admiral died of wounds on the ship he loved . . .

But the ship lives on, and in 1954, the *Victory* is still the flagship of the Admiral in Command at Portsmouth.

It takes team spirit and sweat to build a navy, and the Medway towns were the birthplace of the British Navy. These men of the Dockyard who build and repair Her Majesty's ships are the sons of generations of skilled craftsmen whose enterprise has contributed so largely to the safety of the realm.

It takes team spirit and sweat to build a Labour Party. It was a small, but valiant team at Chatham which worked with Alderman Jenkins in the historic General Election of 1906 and sent him to

join Keir Hardie's group in the House of Commons.

Then followed the years of soapbox pioneering and World War I. Often on the Labour soapbox in the Medway towns stood an earnest young fellow—his name was Attlee. In the 1930's, another promising youngster joined the soapbox team—Hugh Gaitskell was his name.

If you would hear the thrilling story of Socialism in the dockyard towns, talk to Arthur Fray, now at 75 years, still an active Labour Party member. Arthur was a member of the old Amalgamated Society of Engineers. He became first Labour alderman for the City of Rochester and its first and *only* Labour mayor.

In 1938, individual membership for the constituency stood at 980. Like all towns in the Thames and Medway estuaries, Rochester and Chatham felt the full impact of war; and by 1942, membership was reduced to 460.

Meanwhile, Arthur Bottomley, London organiser for N.U.P.E., had been appointed Deputy Regional Commissioner for South-East England. Amongst many other duties, Arthur was soon working in conjunction with the Commander-in-Chief of the *Nore* providing Civil Defence for the Royal Naval Dockyard and the Medway towns. So commenced Bottomley's first official association with Chatham.

In 1944, Jim Green, Constituency Party Chairman, and Arthur Bottomley became the spearheads of a team which laid the foundations of future Labour victories. In that year, Bottomley was selected as prospective Parliamentary candidate.

By 1945, individual membership had risen to 796. On the morning of 26th July, 1945, we sat in the basement of Transport House watching the general election results. Soon there flashed on the screen:

Chatham			
A. G. Bottomley (Lab.)	...	19,250	
L. F. Plugge (Tory)	...	15,534	
Lab. Majority			3,716

That night, George VI sent for an earnest man who used to stand on a soapbox in the Medway towns, and that night Clement Attlee became Prime Minister in the first majority Labour Government.

Arthur Bottomley, M.P., immersed himself in dockyard affairs. Soon the Attlee administration was demonstrating that not only did the Royal Naval Dockyard carry out a higher standard of work, but



could also produce ships more cheaply than other yards. The dockyard workers agreed that the Labour Government had brought them more benefits than any other administration.

In peace and war the thoughts of the mothers, wives and sweethearts of the Medway towns are with those who face the perils and hazards of the sea. Nearly 2,000 men and women of Rochester and Chatham are 'service voters' or 'absent voters'; they serve in Her Majesty's ships, or in the Merchant Navy.

Thirty-one years ago my former colleague, Grace Tavener, visited Rochester Co-op Hall to form the Strood and Frindsbury Women's Section and a pretty young housewife, Mrs. Fever, was elected Section Secretary. For thirty-one years, through peace and war, she held that office.

The first section treasurer collected a few coppers at this inaugural meeting. Thirty-one years later, Mrs. F. Pearce is still the section treasurer, and for twenty-six years Mrs. L. Mankelow has been the section president.

In 1947 the Prime Minister appointed Arthur Bottomley Secretary for Overseas Trade, since when, Bottomley has flown and sailed to the far corners of the earth in the interests of the British peoples.

Labour held Rochester and Chatham in the General Election of 1950, and in the General Election of 1951 Bottomley was the only Labour candidate to double his majority.

Jim Green, still chairman of the Constituency Labour Party, was a proud man when in April, 1953, he attended at Caxton Hall, to receive on behalf of his party, the Southern Regional Membership Shield for the most meritorious membership effort. The membership target set by the Regional Council for Rochester and Chatham was 3,000, the actual membership achieved in 1952 was 4,392.

Jim Green was ill and could not come to Caxton Hall this year, but Walter Brown, Party Agent, marched up to the platform to receive again for Rochester and Chatham, the membership shield.

Target for 1953 ... 4,750

Membership achieved ... 5,950

"How's it done?"

"It's the team spirit," replied Walter Brown.

"That's right," roared the boatswain, "team spirit and sweat—that's what builds ships and Parties!"

Southern

F. SHEPHERD

## T.V. Problem

THE difficulties which television is bringing to the tasks of electioneering have been discussed fairly fully in the columns of the *Organiser*. There is one aspect however, which has not been the subject of articles which I think is of importance especially in relation to local government elections and parliamentary by-elections.

In these contests, TV does not enter the arena as a positive force, but its negative results can be of the greatest influence on our work of canvassing and 'pulling out'.

In the recent by-elections at Haltemprice and Harrogate it was apparent that many electors resented having their TV arrangements upset by the knocking of canvassers. This was not just during the viewing periods but included the time between tea and the start of the programmes.

The whole household tends to be organised for the purpose of getting the dishes washed, the fire stoked and supper prepared in advance, so that at 7.30 everyone can settle down to enjoy the programme.

It may be that this aspect is a passing one, which will be adjusted as and when the novelty of TV has worn off a little and the viewers become more selective, but it is certainly an important matter in the north at present, where we are not quite so accustomed to TV as in the south.

What the answer is, I do not know, beyond running the risks of irate electors and continuing pestering them until they do come out to meet us on the doorstep to receive our message in the canvass period and to record their votes on polling day. Have our 'knockers up' tried to persuade the womanfolk to record their vote during the day-time, instead of "waiting until Dad comes home", on the excuse that by doing so they will have the minimum interference with their night's enjoyment?

For Dad, the only answer seems to be to try and persuade him to vote as he comes home from work. A special message, making this appeal, might be a useful piece of election literature.

North Eastern

J. T. ANSON

(continued on page 120)

## Eastern Champions

IN 1952 our individual membership was 122,967. In 1953 it was 123,053. We thus reached the highest figure ever attained in this region.

Eighty-six was a small increase, but it was really more than we expected, having regard to the vicissitudes which a number of Constituency Labour Parties experienced.

Our average constituency membership was 2,366 and we believe that on this account we headed the Membership Table for Great Britain for the third year in succession.

After holding it for three years continuously, East Ham South only just lost the leadership of the Regional Membership Table to Eye. The former's membership was 18·12 of the 1951 Labour vote and the latter's 18·15—a photo finish indeed!

We congratulate Eye most warmly and knowing the calibre of East Ham South,

we anticipate a great effort by them to regain the leadership.

The figures show that Barking, East Ham South, Hitchin and Romford had more than 4,000 members apiece; and that South Beds., Maldon, East Ham North, Hornchurch, Ilford South, West Ham North, Barnet and Watford each had over 3,000 members.

There were 21 other Constituency Labour Parties with more than 2,000 members, whilst only three Constituency Labour Parties in the region had less than 1,000 individual members each.

Altogether this represents a remarkably good achievement and we congratulate all concerned, especially the collectors, for the part they played in our membership campaign in 1953.

We shall go steadily forward in the present year, always remembering that the collecting system must be adequate to cope with the intake. Spectacular campaigns mean waste of time and money, whereas steady and systematic efforts ensure the building of individual membership on a sound and sure foundation.

Eastern

W. T. YOUNG

## ELECTION ENVELOPES

9" x 4" end flap Buff Manilla. Ungummed.

Printed Black on Face.

**14/6 per 1000**

In 50,000 lots

Inclusive of PRINTING, TAX and CARRIAGE

OTHER QUANTITIES PRO RATA

*All types and sizes of envelopes supplied*

Samples on request to

**RUNPRINT LIMITED**

ENVELOPE MANUFACTURERS

**PAULTON, nr. BRISTOL**

Tel. Midsomer Norton 96

When sending enquiries please quote L.O.1